



Vol. 1

ZERO
ISSUE
COVER A

PAOLO PANTALENA VINCE HERNANDEZ
HI-FI JOSH REED

QWIBA™

Swords of the Demon

#0



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ASPEN

Vol. 1

ZERO
ISSUE
COVER B

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Swords of the Demon



WV15

Issue

ONIBA™
Swords of the Demon

Zero

"No, Master"

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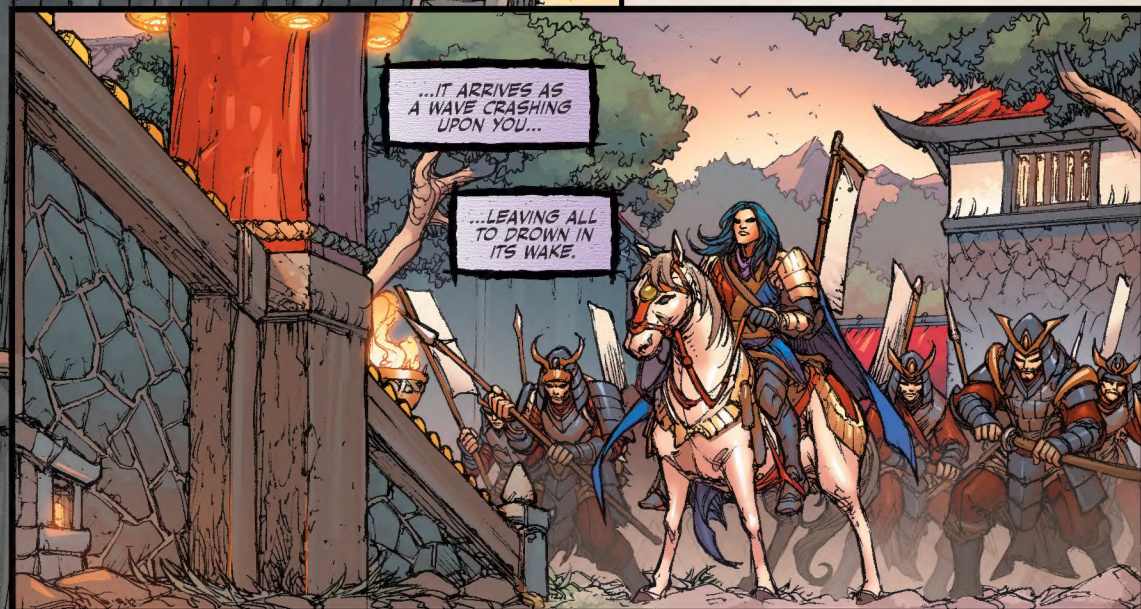
JUNE 21, 1582.

THROUGHOUT
HISTORY, WAR HAS
NEVER PAUSED FOR
PREPARATION...



...IT ARRIVES AS
A WAVE CRASHING
UPON YOU...

...LEAVING ALL
TO DROWN IN
ITS WAKE.



AKECHI...

YOUR ACTIONS
DISAPPOINT ME. YOUR
LOYALTY IS BOUND BY
OATH, THE PRICE OF
BETRAYAL--DEATH.

IT IS
YOU THAT HAS
FAILED US ALL,
NOBUNAGA.

YOUR
COUNTRYMEN...
WE ARE TO SUFFER
IN DISAPPOINTMENT AT YOUR
REIGN OF TERROR. OUR OWN
PEOPLE FEAR FOR THEIR
LIVES--BUT NO
MORE!



YOU ARE NO
LONGER IN POSITION
TO QUESTION OUR
DEVOTION.



SEVERAL MONTHS EARLIER.

IT IS NOT WISE TO ANGER MY MASTER.

NOBUNAGA ODA IS THE MOST POWERFUL DAIMYO TO RULE OUR LAND. AND...ALSO THE MOST BRUTAL.

THE MORI CLAN MUST NOT SURVIVE TO SEE THE NEXT SEASON. THE WEST IS LONG OVERDUE AS A PIECE OF OUR EMPIRE. IS THIS UNDERSTOOD?

UNDERSTOOD.

MASTER... IF I MAY?

SPEAK.

HIDEYOSHI-SAMA IS MY SUPERIOR. I SEEK NOT TO OVERSTEP MY POSITION.

ON YOUR FEET, YUKIKO.

YOU SPEAK THE TRUTH. HOWEVER, HIS STRENGTH IS IN NEGOTIATION, TAXATION AND LAND MEASURES. HE MAY WEAR THE ARMOR, BUT HIS NATURE IS NOT THAT OF BLOODSHED.

YOU ARE MY MOST TRUSTED SWORD. HIS ORDERS ARE TO TAKE THEIR LAND. YOU ARE TO BRING DOWN THEIR RULE. DO YOU SEE THE DIFFERENCE?

AS YOU WISH.

HIS BRUTALITY WOULD BE HIS UNDOING.

THIS IS NOT TO SAY MY OWN TENDENCIES WERE ANY LESS...AGGRESSIVE.

FEAR IS LIKE A DISEASE.

IT SPREADS WITH AN INSATIABLE APPETITE...

I HELPED FEED IT.

THE FIRST STEP IN CLAN REMOVAL IS ALWAYS TO STRIKE AT THE HEART OF THE WEALTHY.

THEY MUST LEARN THEY ARE NOT IMMUNE TO THE DISPUTES OF THE LOWER CASTES.

ULTIMATELY, I TARGETED THE CLAN'S...ELITE WARRIORS, OR SO THEY PRESUMED AS SUCH.

THE REST WAS IN THE HANDS OF HIDEYOSHI-SAMA.

OUR REACH HAS SWELLED UNDER YOUR DUTY, HIDEYOSHI. YOU HAVE SERVED OUR CLAN WELL.

I WILL SEE TO IT THAT YOU ARE AMPLY REWARDED FOR YOUR LOYAL SERVICE.

YOU ARE GRACIOUS BEYOND WORDS, SENSEI.



WHEN I WAS A
CHILD, MY FATHER
SENGO TAUGHT ME
THAT OUR HISTORY
AS A PEOPLE WAS
FORGED FROM
BLOODSHED...

IT WAS NOT
LONG BEFORE
I LEARNED THIS
FIRSTHAND...

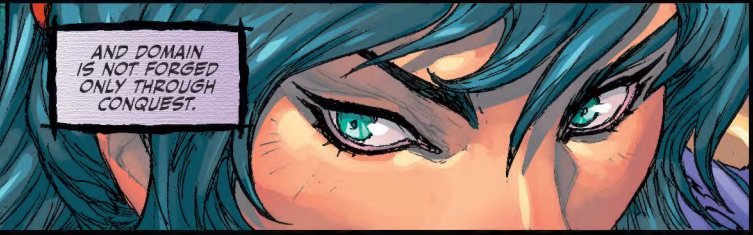


THEN.

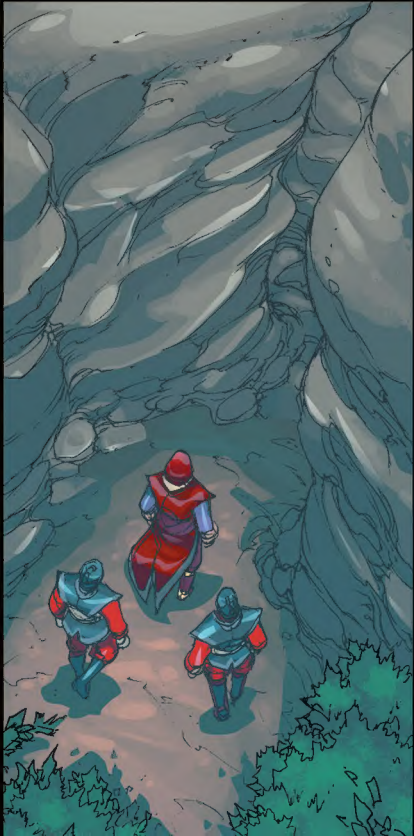
...YET, I ALSO
LEARNED THAT BLOOD IS
NOT THE MOST POWERFUL
CURRENCY IN THE LAND.



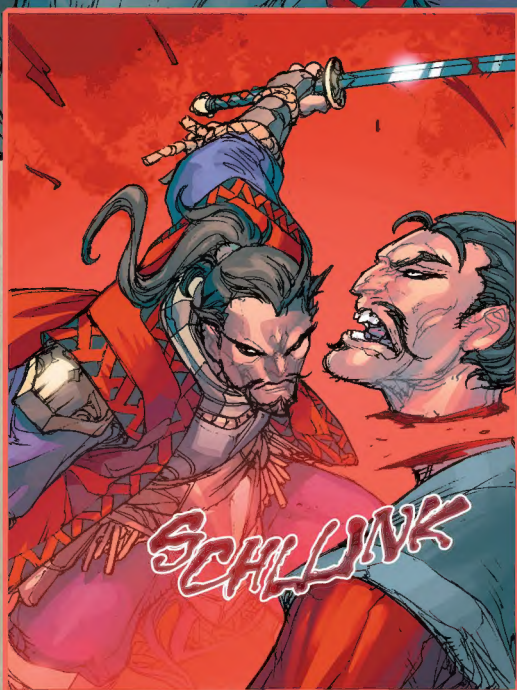
AND DOMAIN
IS NOT FORGED
ONLY THROUGH
CONQUEST.

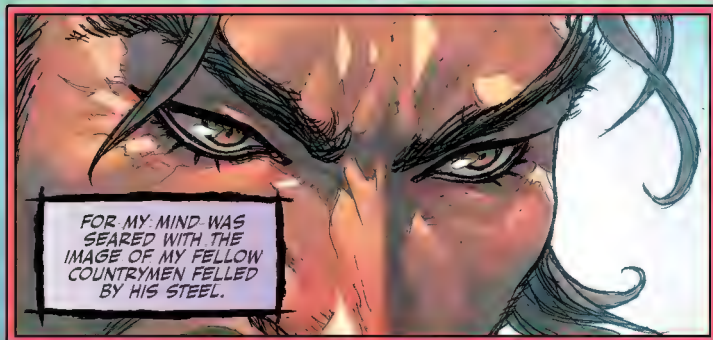
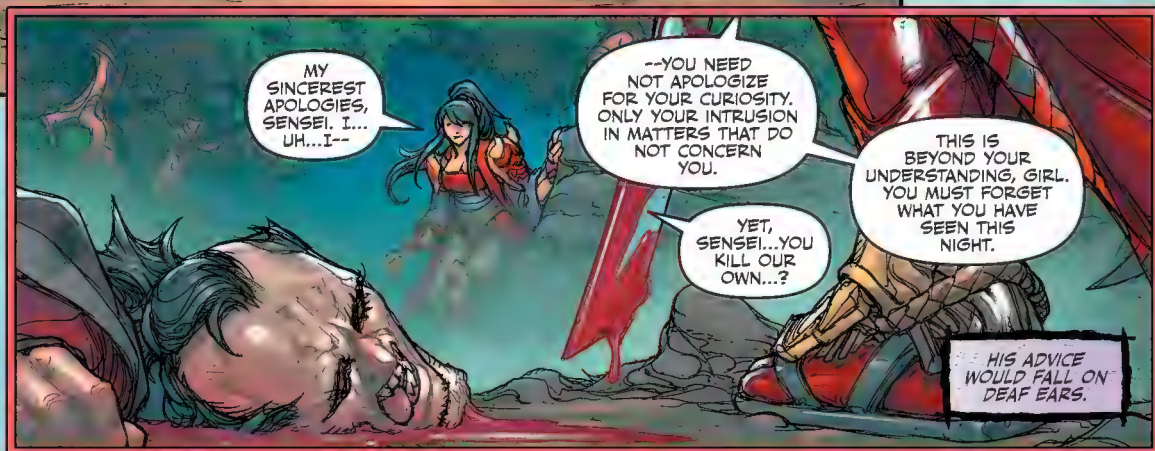
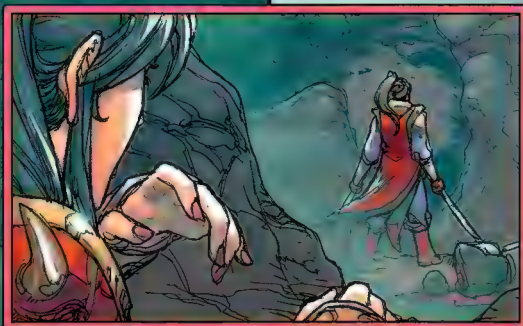


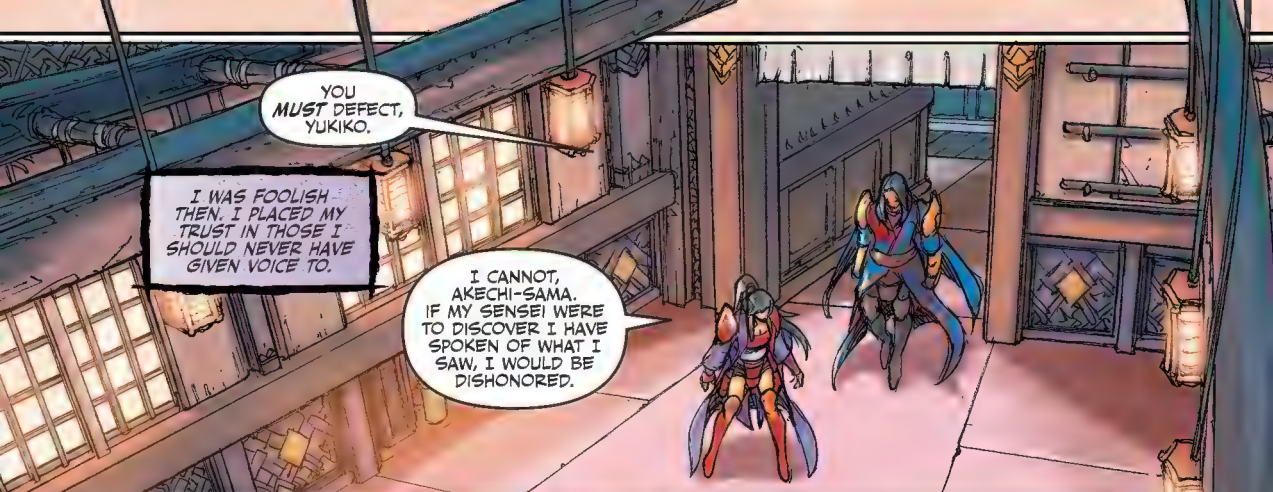
I SUSPECTED AN
ASSASSIN AT FIRST,
HOWEVER, THIS FELT...
DIFFERENT.



MUCH DIFFERENT.



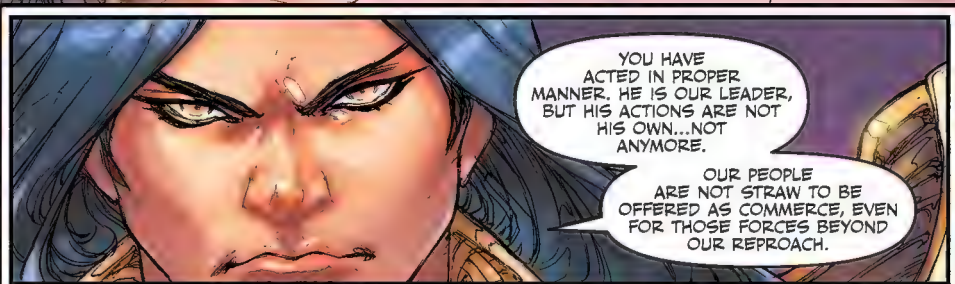




YOU
MUST DEFECT,
YUKIKO.

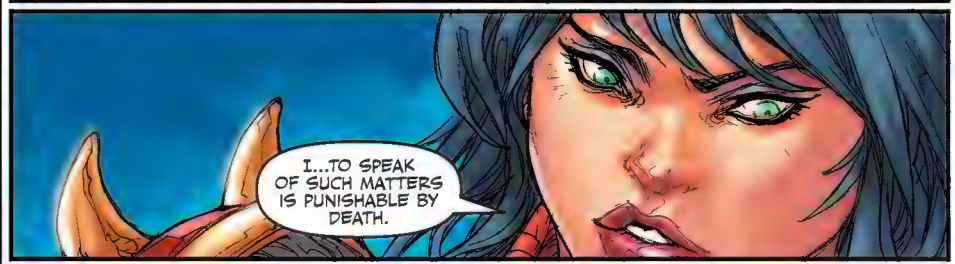
I WAS FOOLISH
THEN. I PLACED MY
TRUST IN THOSE I
SHOULD NEVER HAVE
GIVEN VOICE TO.

I CANNOT,
AKECHI-SAMA.
IF MY SENSEI WERE
TO DISCOVER I HAVE
SPOKEN OF WHAT I
SAW, I WOULD BE
DISHONORED.



YOU HAVE
ACTED IN PROPER
MANNER. HE IS OUR LEADER,
BUT HIS ACTIONS ARE NOT
HIS OWN...NOT
ANYMORE.

OUR PEOPLE
ARE NOT STRAW TO BE
OFFERED AS COMMERCE, EVEN
FOR THOSE FORCES BEYOND
OUR REPROACH.



I...TO SPEAK
OF SUCH MATTERS
IS PUNISHABLE BY
DEATH.



AND TO DO
NOTHING WHILE OUR DAIMYO
MASSACRES OUR OWN IS WORSE
THAN DEATH. IT IS A MARK OF
DISHONOR!

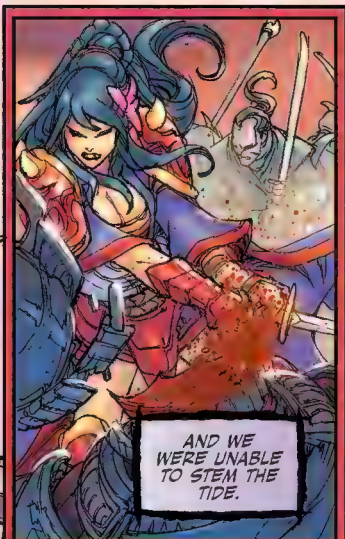
YUKIKO...
NOBUNAGA'S REIGN IS
OVER. I HAVE MUSTERED AN
ARMY CAPABLE OF REVOLT.
THE TIME HAS COME...

...DO NOT
BE LEFT TO
DIE ALONGSIDE
HIM.

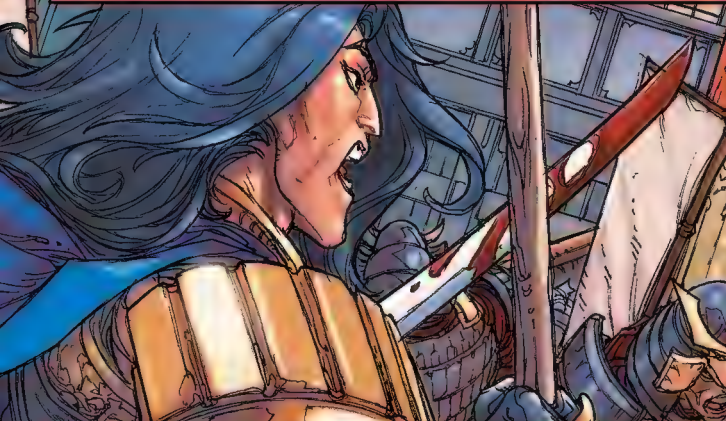




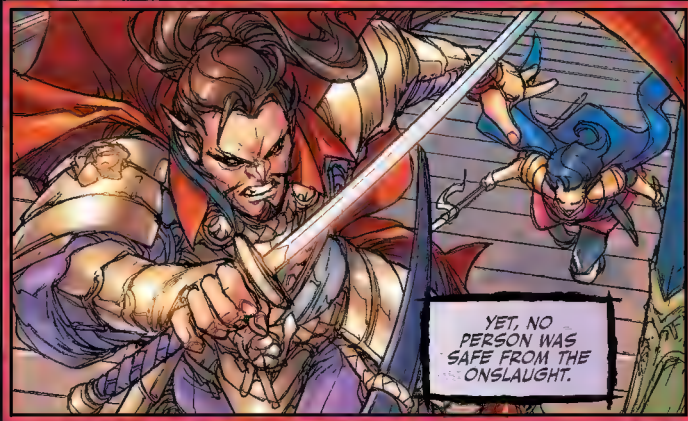
HOWEVER,
BEFORE I COULD
MEDITATE ON THE CHOICE
BEFORE ME, THE WAVE
CRASHED DOWN
UPON US...



AND WE
WERE UNABLE
TO STEM THE
TIDE.



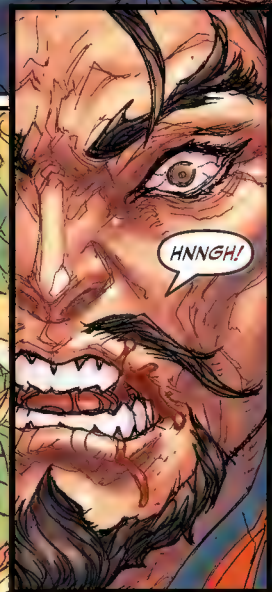
NOBUNAGA WAS
DEFEATED--ALTHOUGH,
NOT IN SPIRIT.



YET, NO
PERSON WAS
SAFE FROM THE
ONSLAUGHT.



THE FUTURE
OF OUR LAND
HELD SWAY.







SCRIPTBOOK PROCESS TO CREATION

TEXT BY VINCE HERNANDEZ
ART BY PAOLO PANTALENA
DESIGN BY GABE CARRASCO

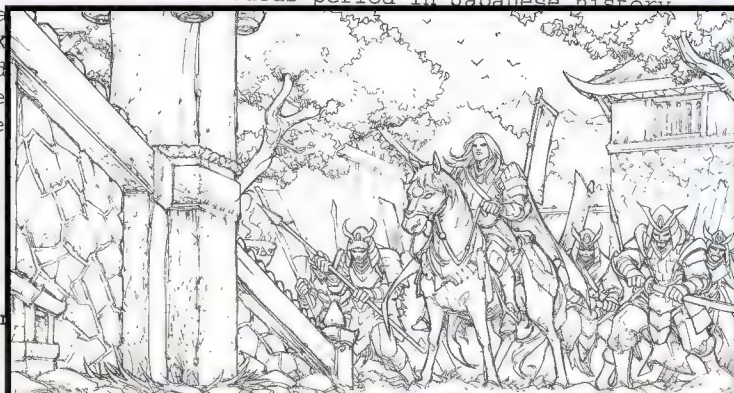
TAKE A DEEPER LOOK INSIDE THE PROCESS FROM SCRIPT TO PENCILS OF THE ONIBA: SWORDS OF THE DEMON ZERO ISSUE WITH THIS COMPREHENSIVE BEHIND-THE-SCENES LOOK! FROM WORDS TO REALITY, SEE CREATORS PAOLO PANTALENA AND VINCE HERNANDEZ BRING THIS ADVENTURE TO LIFE!

feudal warlords, of this tumultuous period in Japanese history, or NOBUNAGA is flanked by one woman: YUKIKO. They appear re-guarding the e

CAPTION:

CAPTION:

YUKIKO (Caption)



PANEL 2:

A reverse shot, as we see what these Samurai Warriors are looking at- A Samurai General, **AKECHI MITSUhide**, a fierce warrior that is seated atop a HORSE opposite their army. He is ALSO flanked by an ARMY of his own trusted SAMURAI WARRIORS. This is the historical story of "suicide" setting it ablaze. our story his mysterious death what really happened.

SPOILERS!



PANEL 5:

Tight on YUKIKO, who is looking to NOBUNAGA with nervous eyes after this threat by AKECHI. She has seen firsthand the result of angering NOBUNAGA. She knows her master will not take such words well.

YUKIKO (Caption): Leaving all to drown in its wake...

ONIBA-00 PAGE THREE



YUKIKO (Caption): It spreads with an insatiable appetite...

YUKIKO (Caption): I helped feed it.

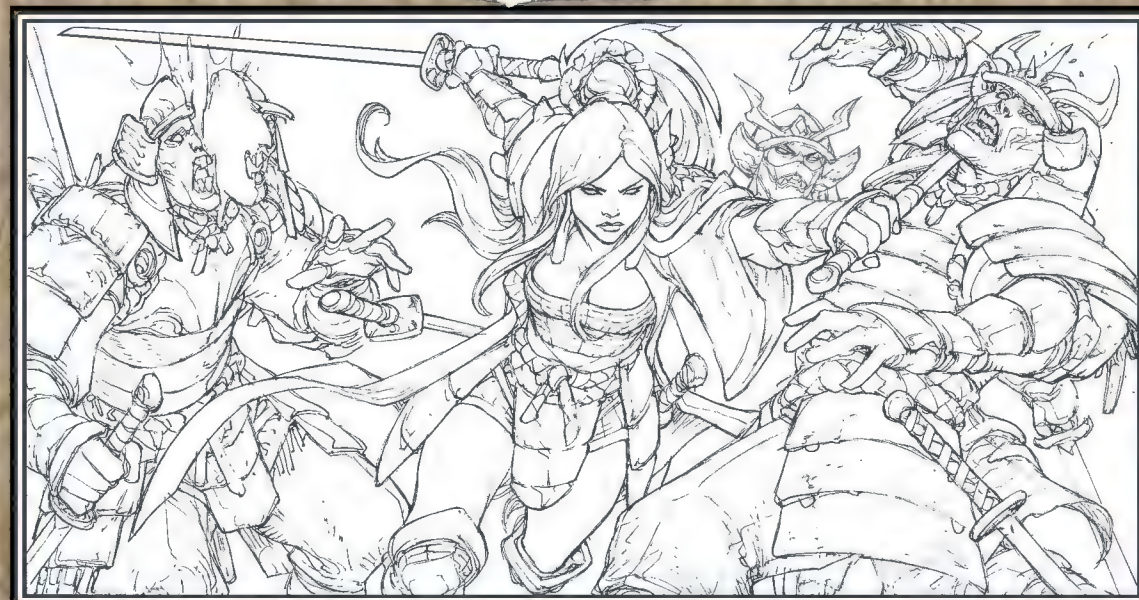
PANEL 3:

We see YUKIKO taking on THREE MORI CLAN SAMURAI at once in battle, revealing her mastery of the art of swordplay.

YUKIKO (Caption): Ultimately, I targeted the clan's ... elite warriors, or so they presumed as such.

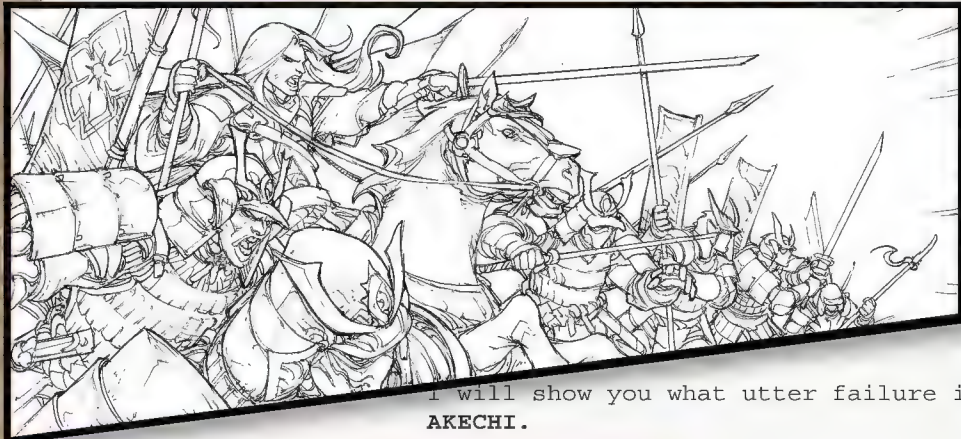
PANEL 4:

YUKIKO stands in NOBUNAGA's Castle Chamber Room from the previous page, watching silently as GENERAL HASHIBA HIDEYOSHI, her superior, stands before NOBUNAGA accepting his undue praise.



ONIBA-00 PAGE FOUR

VINCE HERNANDEZ



GA!

I will show you what utter failure is,
AKECHI.

PANEL 3.

AKECHI's Army is now storming the Shrine.

AKECHI:

Attack!

PANEL 4.

Reverse angle as NOBUNAGA is sending his troops to battle as well.

NOBUNAGA:

Hraaaaah!



ONIBA-00 PAGE FIVE

VINCE HERNANDEZ

SPLASH:

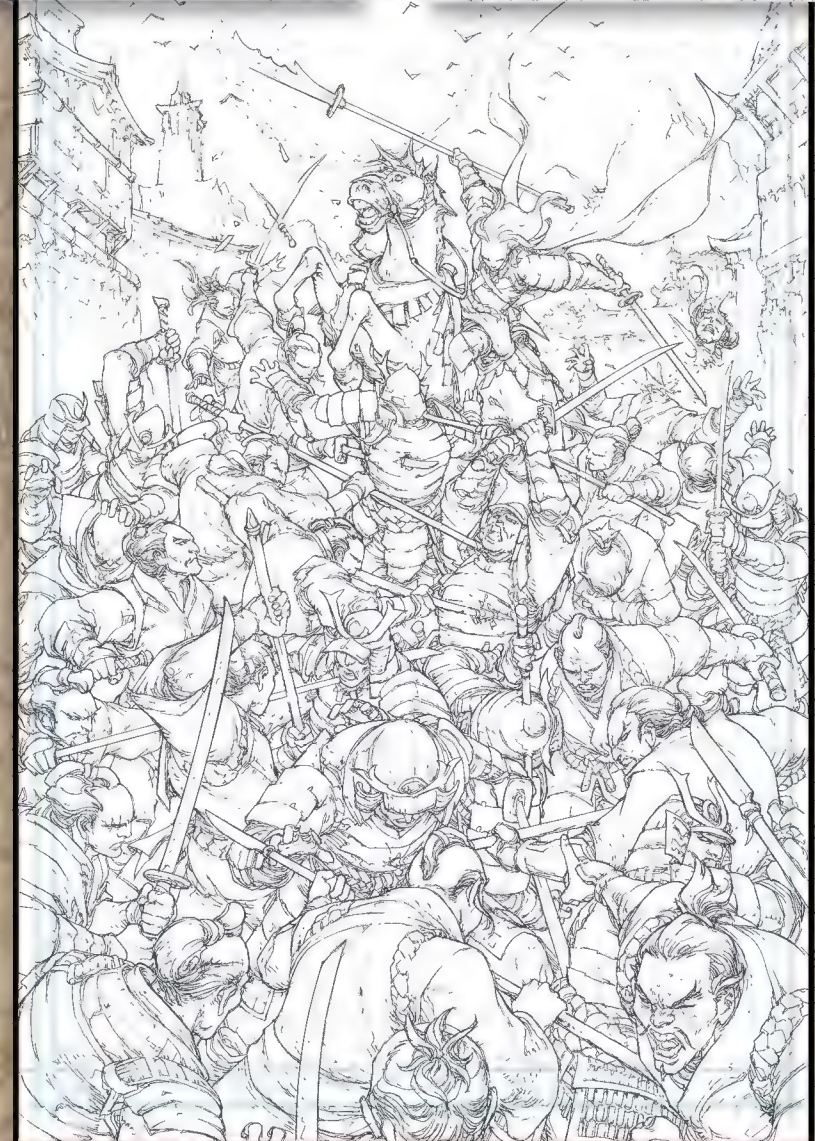
NOBUNAGA and AKECHI's forces clash in battle. Much gore and violence ensues.

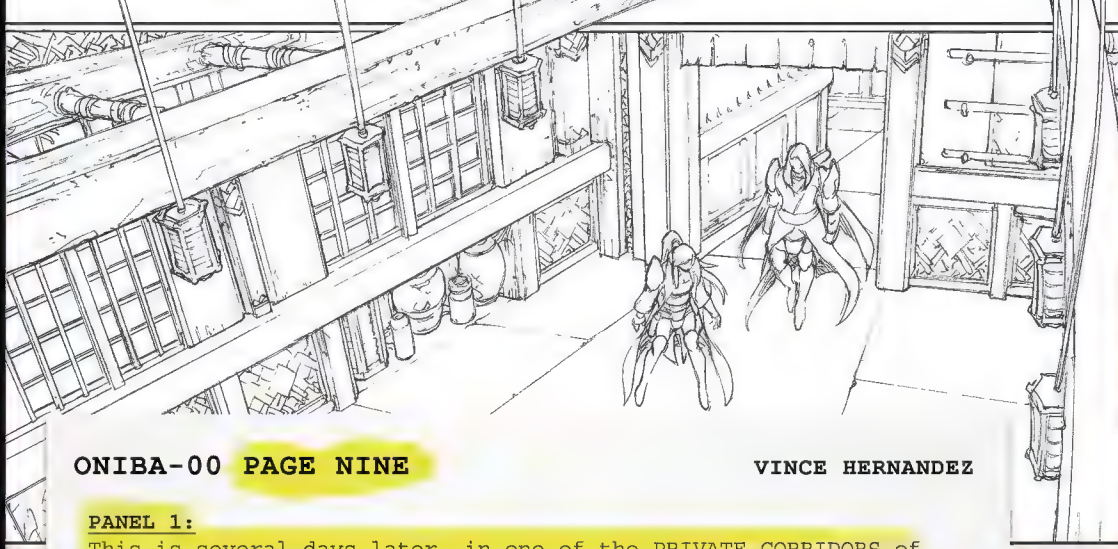
YUKIKO (Caption):

When I was a child, my father Sengo taught me that our history as a people was forged from bloodshed...

YUKIKO (Caption):

It was not long before I learned this firsthand...





ONIBA-00 PAGE NINE

VINCE HERNANDEZ

PANEL 1:

This is several days later, in one of the PRIVATE CORRIDORS of NOBUNAGA's Castle. YUKIKO stands before AKECHI MITSUhide, the foe from page 1. They are in private discussion away from any eavesdropping ears. AKECHI looks impatient while YUKIKO appears confused and nervous.

AKECHI: You must defect, YUKIKO.

YUKIKO (Caption): I was foolish then. I placed my trust in those I should never have given voice to.

YUKIKO: I cannot, AKECHI-SAMA. If my sensei were to discover I have spoken of what I saw, I would be dishonored.



PANEL 4:

AKECHI has leaned in closer to make his point felt.

AKECHI: YUKIKO...NOBUNAGA's reign is over. I have mustered an army capable of revolt. The time has come...

PANEL 5:

Close on YUKIKO as she is pondering this news against her own fears.

AKECHI (Off Panel): ...Do not be left to die alongside him.



SCRIPTBOOK
PROCESS TO CREATION

A QUEST FOR EXCELLENCE...

FIRST, IF YOU'RE READING THIS, ALLOW US TO EXTEND OUR DEEPEST THANKS FOR SUPPORTING THIS VERY SPECIAL ENDEAVOR OF OURS. MUCH LIKE OUR HEROINE, YUKIKO, WHO SET UPON A PASSAGE FROM SAMURAI TO RONIN AND EVENTUALLY FAR MORE, WE HAVE SET FORTH ON A JOURNEY TO TELL A VAST TALE SPANNING AN ENTIRE COUNTRY'S HISTORY WHILE INCLUDING SOME SUPERNATURAL TOUCHES OF OUR OWN. ALONG THE WAY, WE ENCOUNTERED MANY CHALLENGES AND EXCITING REVELATIONS THAT HELPED SHAPE THIS SERIES. IN MANY WAYS, IT MIRRORED THE STORY OF YUKIKO AND HER ADVENTURE.

TWO YEARS AGO, PAOLO PANTALENA CAME TO ME WITH AN IDEA FOR A COMIC BOOK. I WAS HONORED THAT HE ASKED ME TO PARTICIPATE AND HELP SHAPE THE STORY YOU'VE JUST BEGUN READING. HOWEVER, THE MASSIVE TASK OF CREATING A NEW WORLD NOW RESTED ON OUR SHOULDERS. AS CREATORS LIVING ON SEPARATE CONTINENTS, WE FELT IT WAS IMPORTANT TO GO BEYOND JUST GOOGLE FOR OUR RESEARCH. AND SO, FOR THE NEXT TWO YEARS, AS PAOLO VISITED THE US FOR VARIOUS CONVENTIONS WE BEGAN THE MONUMENTAL TASK OF RESEARCHING THIS AMBITIOUS NEW PROJECT.

ONE SUCH VISIT FOUND US IN LITTLE TOKYO IN LOS ANGELES AS WE SOUGHT TO FIND INSPIRATION FOR THE VARIOUS LOCATIONS, CHARACTER DESIGNS, AND OVERALL FEEL OF ONIBA. ANOTHER MEETING FOUND US VOCALLY DEBATING THE STORY IN WAYS ONLY TWO DERANGED AND OVERLY PASSIONATE CREATORS CAN UNDERSTAND. BUT, AT THE HEART OF OUR DEVELOPMENT WAS ALWAYS THE BEST STORY POSSIBLE, AND DURING THAT TIME WE NEVER LOST FOCUS OF OUR GOAL.

THE BOOK YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS IS THE RESULT OF THOSE TWO YEARS OF PLANNING, RESEARCH, FIELD TRIPS, HARD WORK, AND MANY LONG HOURS. AND AS YUKIKO—AND YOURSELVES— WILL COME TO REALIZE...

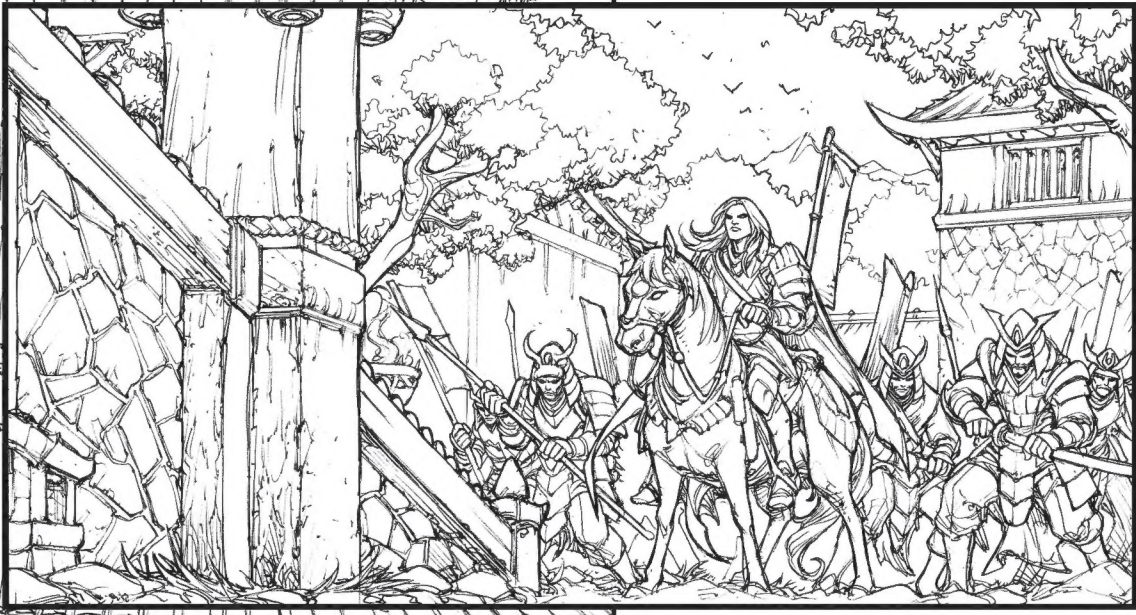
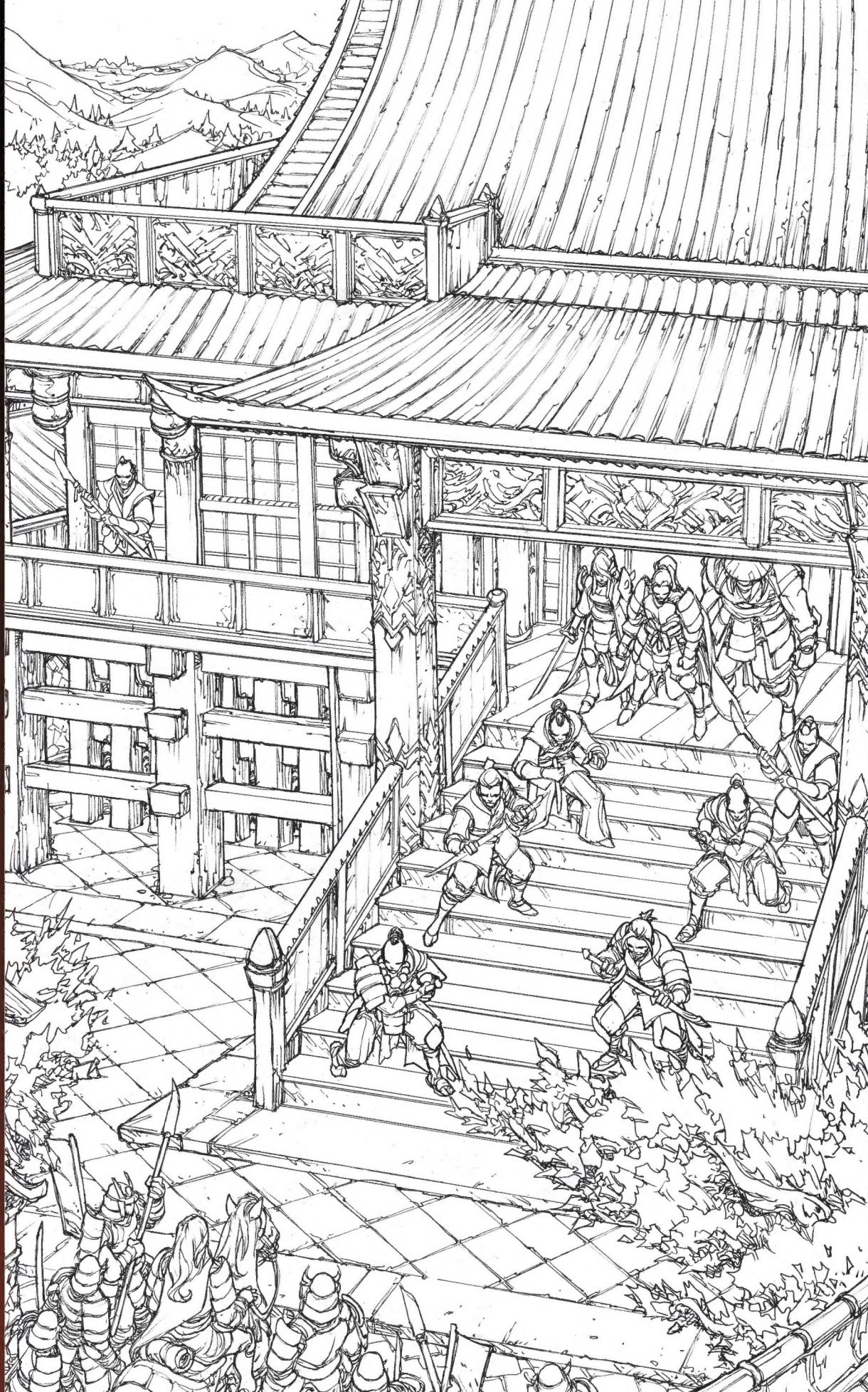
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING.

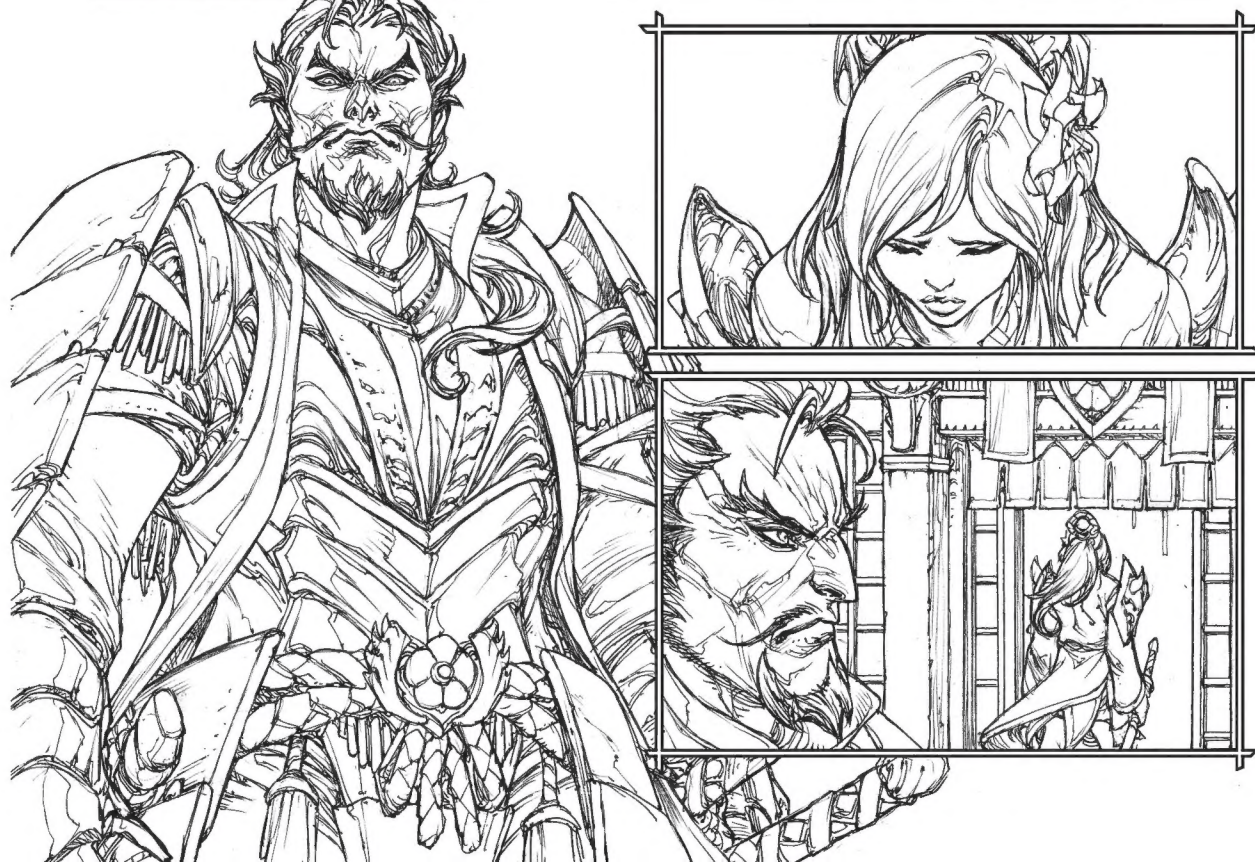
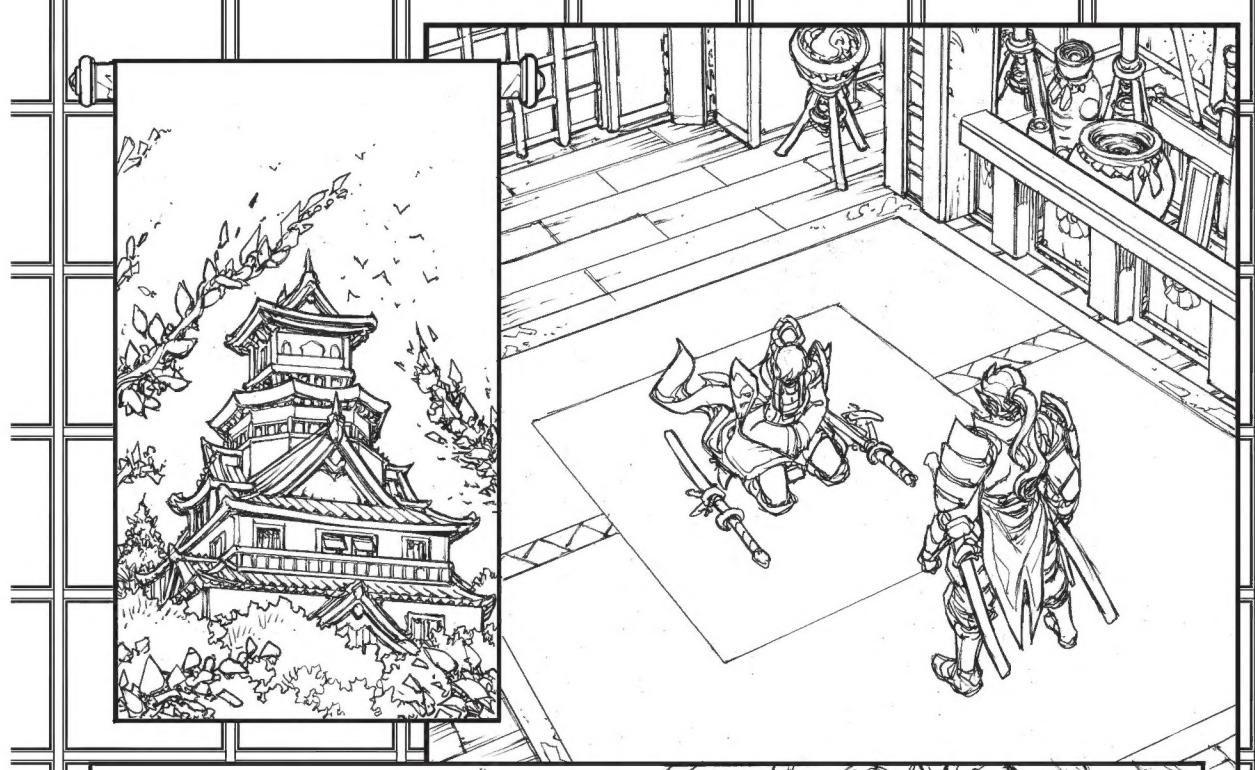
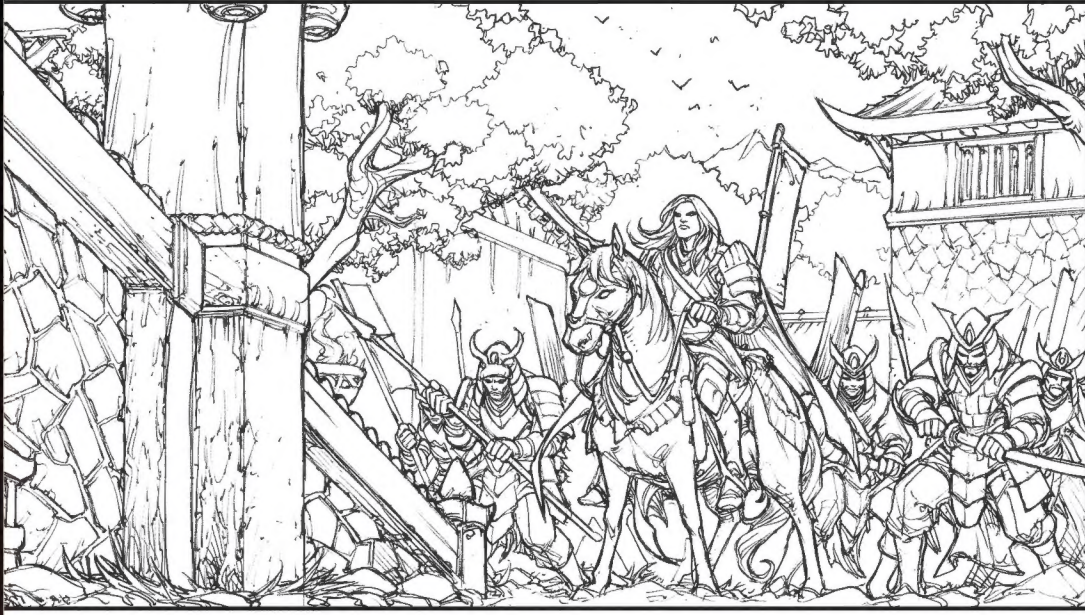
Vince Hernandez

VINCE HERNANDEZ,
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
ASPEN MLT



AN INSIDE
LOOK AT: **ONIBA: SWORDS OF THE DEMON #0**





AN INSIDE
LOOK AT: **ONIBA: SWORDS OF THE DEMON #0**



